

I am deeply troubled by the recent announcement that Sinclair Broadcasting will be requiring their stations to pre-empt regular programming in order to broadcast a partisan political film about John Kerry.

This film is being promoted as news. However, after watching the earlier ads by the "Swift Boat Veterans" it is apparent that the film is actually a political advertisement intended to cast doubt on Senator Kerry's integrity.

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.